Kawasaki Disease Awareness
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Raising awareness of a rare disease, such as Kawasaki disease, is vital not only to inform the public of the dangers of the disease, but also to help the KD community find resources to help them cope with dealing with this illness. For this reason, in 2011 the Kawasaki Disease Foundation declared January 26 the first National Kawasaki Disease Awareness Day in the United States, and they presented the resolution before the 111th Congress, 2nd Session. The Kawasaki Disease Foundation chose this date because, “on January 26, 1961, Dr. Tomisaku Kawasaki of Japan had his “aha” moment when he saw his second patient with the telltale signs of what would later be named Kawasaki Disease,” said Greg Chin, president of the Kawasaki Disease Foundation.

The Kawasaki Disease Foundation encourages KD families to use this landmark day to help draw attention to this disease, which is currently the number one cause of acquired heart disease in U.S. children. Aside from using your Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social networks updates to raise KD awareness on the 26th, you should also please consider holding an awareness day event and/or asking the Governor or Mayor of your town to declare January 26 National Kawasaki Disease Awareness Day.

Since 2011 some states, counties and local legislatures have passed proclamations in honor of Kawasaki Disease Awareness Day; San Diego County, San Francisco County, Alabama and Anchorage, Alaska are some of the cities that have officially declared January 26 KD Awareness Day. If you are interested in helping the Kawasaki Disease Foundation raise awareness of KD, please consider helping make the 26th official in your area.

The Kawasaki Disease Foundation’s resolution can be found by clicking here. They also have a news release for KD awareness day which can be found by clicking here. Please consider contacting your local representatives and ask them to declare January 26 National Kawasaki Disease Awareness Day. A national listing of State Governors can
be found here, and you can find your local Mayor’s information via your city’s website.

More ideas for KD Awareness Day events can be found below. And whatever you decide to do, do not forget Margaret Mead’s wise words in that you should, “Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

How to raise KD Awareness on the 4th National Kawasaki Disease Awareness Day

January 26, 2014
• Ask your Governor or Mayor to declare January 26 National KD Awareness Day in your city. Although this may seem intimidating or difficult, it is not. In fact, two years ago I contacted my local Mayor’s office and they were extremely helpful. All I had to do was provide some information about Kawasaki disease to the Mayor’s Office of Communications along with the KDF proclamation, and voilà! (Please note that you can do this year round, it does not necessarily have to be on January 26).

• Participate in KD studies. KD research is partly accomplished through funds raised via the Kawasaki Disease Foundation’s ‘To Save a Child’s Heart’ annual galas, through parent hosted fundraisers nationwide, and through many kind donors, but it would not be possible if KD patients and families did not participate in research. So help researchers find answers to the many unknowns of KD by donating your DNA for KD research. Dr. Burns’ lab at UCSD provides kits by mail so that you can participate in her studies regardless of where you live. To get involved visit Dr. Burns’ lab at www.pediatrics.ucsd.edu/kawasaki.

• Use social networks to raise KD awareness. We all use them, and we all have them, so use your social network status to raise KD awareness. Post KD facts every day in January leading up to the 26th, post videos or pictures to inform the public.

• Ask your friends and family to donate $26 on the 26th in honor of your KD child, sibling, cousin, neighbor, etc. The KD Foundation is supported entirely by unpaid volunteers and individual and corporate donations. Your tax-deductible contributions will support the foundation’s important awareness and support initiatives. Donate via PayPal by clicking here.

• Pass out KD symptoms posters at local childcare centers, preschools, pediatrician’s offices etc. Early diagnosis is vital to prevent long term heart damage, so recognizing the symptoms is important and what better way to spread awareness than by passing out posters on KD awareness day. Posters can be downloaded via the KD Foundation’s website for printing, or attached in an email, or you can request hard copies by contacting us at info@kdfoundation.org. To print the posters from home please follow this link http://www.kdfoundation.org/index.php/information-for-families/kdposters.

• Wear your KD Awareness t-shirt, bracelet or pins and tell people about Kawasaki disease when they ask you, “what is Kawasaki disease.”

• Pass out red heart lollipops on the 26th with a small label tied on to the lollipop with KD facts. (Since Valentine’s Day is right around the corner, finding heart lollipops is easier than ever). This is an easy and affordable way to help spread awareness in your community as you can pass out lollipops in your child’s school, at your work or to random strangers throughout the day. I once gave a heart lollipop to my Barista and the conversation lead to me sharing many facts about KD—goal of raising awareness, accomplished!
• Provide informational material about KD to school staff, employees and parents. You can type out a postcard size paper with KD facts and/or your KD child’s picture and brief KD story.

• Ask your child’s school principal or staff to help you raise awareness by asking students to wear red. You can send a letter home explaining to the kids’ parents why KD awareness is important and give them some KD facts and/or share your KD kid’s story. You can then give prizes for the class, department or room that wore the most red. (You may include a flyer or ask your school principal to email parents with KD info, and add a link to the KD foundation’s donation page).

http://www.kdfoundation.org/index.php/how-to-donate/wanttodonate

• Use your car to raise KD awareness. Use car markers or other non-permanent markers to tag up your car with KD facts on KD Awareness Day. Make sure to include a link to the KD Foundation on there.

• Another fabulous idea is to host a flashmob. If you are not sure what a flashmob is you can find more info here, but if you are aware of this fun and entertaining artistic expression, you can have friends and family members wear red or KD awareness shirts and organize a flashmob on the 26th. When the dance is over participants can pass out KD awareness flyers or heart lollipops with KD facts.

• Share KD videos and facts via email to your friends. Some very informative and creative videos can be found here:

  Kawasaki Disease - Animated Heart

  Kawasaki Disease Foundation - Join the Quest

  Kawasaki Disease: A Parents Guide

• Ask your local library for permission to set up a table or display with KD facts. This can be set up before the 26th and kept up as long as they allow you to.

• Organize a 5K run in your community or in your child’s school and have the profits earmarked for KD research via the KD foundation. Need help? Contact us and we’ll help you get started.

  In raising awareness, the possibilities are endless, so please help spread the word about KD on this upcoming 4th National Kawasaki Disease Awareness Day.